

Shipboard Safety Management and Contingency Plan Guide

This guide is to be used in the preparation of a Shipboard Safety Management and Contingency Plan that will provide risk-control measures that, when fully implemented, successfully mitigate the hazards present when a small passenger vessel operates without a deckhand. This alternative is available to small passenger vessels that operate exclusively within the zone of the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, Jacksonville, FL, and are less than 65 feet in length, carry less than 49 passengers or less and operate exclusively on Lakes, Bays & Sounds (LBS) and Rivers route.

In general, the plan shall:

- ❑ Provide information to assist the vessel's master in preparing to handle an emergency, and to take the necessary actions to stop or minimize damage and to mitigate the effects of an emergency.
- ❑ Include all the required risk-control strategies listed in CID Policy Letter 1-03, dated September 19, 2003, and be tailored for the particular vessel for which the plan is developed.
- ❑ Establish procedures to get passengers from various spaces on the vessel to an assembly station; direct them on to the embarkation stations; and evacuate them to points of safety in an emergency.
- ❑ Describe the method and procedure for providing timely instructions to passengers.
- ❑ List external organizations that the plan holder would call for assistance in the event of each type of maritime incident. The organizations should be listed as key contacts on the plan and might include government agencies, fire departments, hospitals, vessel or equipment providers, and contractors providing specialized services such as towing and barge services, and trained personnel related to control, triage, or recovery operations.
- ❑ Describe the different training that will be offered to prepare the crew to handle emergency situations. The training should include theoretical instruction and practical training through simulation of incidents so that the crew can rehearse and practice their roles.
- ❑ Be realistic, practical, and easy to use and understand by company personnel, both on board and ashore.
- ❑ Have a designated space to allow for recording "lessons learned" during a simulation exercise. Periodically incorporate the "lessons learned" into the plan to continuously improve it.
- ❑ Be reviewed, evaluated, exercised, and updated regularly.

- ❑ Be kept in a loose-leaf binder. This will allow information to be updated regularly as it becomes available.
 - ❑ Have flow charts or checklists to guide personnel through the various actions and decisions required during an incident response. Checklists and flowcharts reduce oversight errors during emergency situations.
 - ❑ Be readily available on board.
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Specifically, the plan shall, at a minimum, address the following sections and content:

❑ **SHIPBOARD SAFETY MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

Discuss the overall company and shipboard management policies in this section. Different companies will have different management structures and reporting hierarchies. Differences may also be due to the number and type of vessels owned by the company and their operating routes. However, even though management procedures and policies may be different, the objective of the plan must always be to mitigate the effects of a casualty and get passengers to safety in an emergency.

Training: Determine the level of training required for different members of the company. Discuss how this training will be conducted. Members that have specific responsibilities during an emergency should be familiar with their position and role in an emergency. Members that do not have specific responsibilities during an emergency should have at least a basic familiarization of the vessel and procedures. Training may be conducted through training manuals and videos, supplemented by a series of practical, hands-on, and training exercises / drills.

Duties and Responsibilities: Prepare a Company Station Bill or muster list for each emergency. Cite specific responsibilities for each individual position listed on the bill. As far as possible, an individual's duties should not vary with different emergencies. Also list the duties and responsibilities of all individuals tasked to ensure that emergency equipment such as communication devices, fire extinguishing equipment, first aid kits, and lifesaving devices are always operational.

Safety Instructions to Passengers: Discuss how the following information will be provided to passengers:

- How the signal for an emergency will be given.
- How to proceed after hearing the emergency signal.
- How assistance will be provided to disabled persons in an emergency.
- How to recognize Company's personnel and follow instructions.
- How abandon-ship procedures will be carried out including moving to embarkation stations, and survival craft, if applicable. Encourage passengers to look for the

designated abandon ship stations so they learn that the point where they came aboard via the gangway is not necessarily the place to go in an emergency.

- How to don a lifejacket.

This information should be provided in one or a combination of the four alternatives discussed below.

Passenger Safety Orientation: Before getting underway on a voyage or as soon as practicable thereafter, public announcements can be made that cover the information required to be passed in accordance with 46 CFR 185.506, as well as any of the additional risk-control measures that this plan implements that, if not made, would likely decrease the passenger's survivability of a casualty.

Video Presentation: This can be accomplished by placing video monitors in public spaces both on board vessels and in boarding terminals. Choose public spaces such as lobbies and waiting areas that will attract passenger attention and provide optimum viewing opportunity. Display the safety video program at least once immediately before, and once immediately after a new set of passengers have boarded the vessel.

Safety Card: Each passenger should be given an illustrated card or folder explaining the emergency and safety-related procedures aboard the vessel. Distribute the safety card before or immediately after a passenger boards the vessel. Design the card or folder using diagrams and pictures to the greatest extent possible. The safety card or folder should be a stand alone document and not contain advertisements, discount coupons, shopping information, etc. Categorize information in the card by degrees of severity so as not to trivialize the seriousness of some of the more important survival information. Separate action items from informational items. Write the safety cards in the active voice.

Posted Notices: Safety information can also be provided by posting safety notices or instructions. These instructions should be similar to the safety card or folder described earlier. Post these notices at locations throughout the vessel and in boarding terminals in spaces where they are most likely to be seen by passengers. Bring the posted notices to the attention of the passengers by making a safety announcement. Make the announcement after boarding all the passengers, and either prior to or immediately upon the vessel's departure from the berth.

❑ **EMERGENCY ACTION OR CONTINGENCY PLANS**

The emergency action or contingency plans should provide the actions to take in responding to specific emergencies. In responding to a casualty, the master's priority should be to ensure the safety of personnel and the vessel, and to take action to prevent escalation of the incident. Develop a contingency action plan for each emergency that might be encountered. The steps followed for every emergency could be very similar.

Geographical Area of Operation: The geographic area in which the vessel operates will greatly influence the contents of the plan. Take into account the local conditions such as distance from shore, depth of water, temperature, water current, visibility, vessel traffic, and local search and rescue resources. Also take into account the vessel's own lifesaving and firefighting equipment. A plan that relies on the response of external resources must include the organizations controlling those resources in the development of the plan. In addition, such organizations need to have their own version of the plan, describing their response responsibilities and procedures.

Evacuation Procedures: Regardless of the type of contingency that a vessel may face, the primary objective in each case is to prevent any loss of life. Prepare procedures for evacuating passengers from the embarkation area to points of safety. Address all possible emergency scenarios. The procedures will vary depending on the type of emergency, the number and type of lifesaving appliances on board, and the shore side rescue assets and resources available at short notice.

Considerations in Developing Evacuation Procedures Consider the factors discussed below when developing evacuation procedures.

Passenger Diversity: Passengers may be -

- Elderly and frail;
- Physically handicapped;
- Inebriated; or
- Separated from the group or family they came with, especially separated from small children.

Passenger Accountability: It is important to keep a count of all passengers that are on board the vessel at any given time and to develop a procedure for accounting for passengers during an emergency.

Lifesaving Appliances: Take into account the lifesaving appliances that are available and their stowed location on board while preparing evacuation procedures. Lifejackets must be available for every person on board the vessel, and must be stowed in public areas or assembly stations, so that passengers can go directly to the assembly stations without having to detour to collect their lifejackets. Stow lifejackets so that distribution and donning does not impede or slow traffic through the passageways.

Assessment of Emergencies: The first step in the process is to assess the extent of the emergency such as the nature of the damage, failure, or breakdown of the vessel machinery or equipment. Provide strict guidelines as to when and how to report the situation. Give the master guidance to evaluate a situation and assess the risk to passengers given the geographical area of the vessel's operation. It is impracticable to lay down precise definitions for all situations, but in general, the master should immediately inform the Coast Guard and other port and shore authorities in cases of collision, grounding, fire, explosion, structural failure, flooding, failure or breakdown of machinery or equipment such as steering gear, main propulsion, electrical generating system, and essential shipboard navigational aids.

Procedures to Mobilize Emergency Response Teams (ERT): Compile a list of specific, sequential or concurrent actions that must be taken to counteract each emergency and prevent or minimize any damages. Identify who on board is responsible for each action to avoid confusion during the emergency. The actions listed below are only a guide and could be started concurrently. The actions are not all inclusive nor do they restrict the master's discretion. Expect to accomplish most of the action items in the list within the first 10 minutes of an incident.

Loss of Steering or Vessel Not Under Control

- Engage local steering from the steering flat.
- Post lookouts and establish lines of communications between the steering room and the bridge.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Provide status to other vessels in the area and maintain contact through VHF channels.
- Deploy the anchor if appropriate.
- Make an announcement over the PA system providing a status report to passengers.
- Assemble passengers at the assembly station and take a count of the passengers.
- Inform vessel owners, agents, and other involved parties.
- Contact shore resources, if appropriate, such as river police, tugboat or barge companies.
- Have a tugboat push the vessel back to dock and evacuate passengers.

Collision and Grounding

- Close all watertight doors.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Make an announcement over the PA system providing a status report to passengers.
- Assemble passengers at the assembly station, provide first aid if required, and take a count of the passengers.
- Locate and assess the damage.
- Isolate damaged area if possible.

- Provide status report to other vessels in the area and maintain contact through VHF channels.
- Inform vessel owners, agents, and other involved parties.
- Contact shore resources, if appropriate, such as river police and towboat or barge companies.
- Take tank soundings to determine any hull breach/oil spill.
- In case of oil spill or discharge, take actions as described under “Oil spill”.
- In case of fire, take actions as described under “Fire and explosion”.
- If the decision is made to abandon ship, take actions described under “Abandon vessel”.

Fire and Explosion

- Start the fire pumps
- Locate the seat of the fire.
- Sound the general alarm.
- Announce over the PA system the nature of the emergency.
- Isolate fire by emergency shut down of blowers, vents, fire screen doors, skylights, etc.
- Evacuate passengers to an area of safe refuge.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Take a count of passengers and check for missing or injured people.
- Proceed to extinguish the fire.
- Announce over the VHF radio the vessel’s status and establish communications with vessels in the area, and seek help if required.
- Assess the damage to the vessel.
- Inform vessel owners and agents.
- Inform the Coast Guard.
- Inform port and other local authorities such as the fire department and hospitals.
- Make the decision to stay or abandon ship.
- If the decision is made to abandon ship, take actions described under “Abandon vessel”.

Oil Spill

- Identify and secure the source of the spill.
- If fueling or transferring oil, stop immediately.
- Remove or disable potential ignition sources.
- Contain the spill using onboard equipment.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Keep passengers away from the affected area.
- Inform the Coast Guard and other local authorities.
- Continue clean up operations.

Bomb Threat

- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Inform the Coast Guard, port authorities, local police and fire departments, area hospitals, and appropriate Federal agencies.
- If at a terminal, disembark passengers immediately.
- Sequester passengers in a previously searched area.
- Take a count of passengers and check for missing or injured people.
- Announce over the PA system the nature of the emergency.
- In consultation with local authorities, make the decision to abandon ship or proceed to the nearest port.
- Upon arrival at port, disembark the passengers immediately.

Flooding

- Sound the general alarm.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Close the watertight doors.
- Close the firescreen doors.
- Locate the extent of the damage.
- Start the bilge and other available pumping systems.
- Isolate the damaged area, control the flooding, and reduce the free surface.
- Send a distress message over the VHF radio.
- Assemble passengers in the assembly station.
- Announce over PA system and prepare to abandon ship if necessary.

Abandon Ship

- A vessel that is tied pierside and that has easy access to shore should be evacuated as quickly as possible.
- The decision to abandon an underway vessel must only be made when all other options have been exhausted.
- Inform vessel owners, agents, and other involved parties.
- Contact shore resources, if appropriate, such as river police and towboat or barge companies.
- Initiate and maintain contact with other vessels in the area through VHF channels.
- Announce over the PA system the nature of the emergency and intended action.
- Take a count of the passengers that have been assembled at the assembly or muster station.
- Inform master of missing or unaccounted passengers.
- Give instructions to passengers on the next course of action such as donning a lifejacket, using a chute or slide, or entering a liferaft, as appropriate.
- Maintain contact with other vessel and shore resources to plan and execute the most effective way to evacuate passengers. Such action could be intentional grounding of the vessel, running it into shore, or maneuvering vessel alongside a barge or other rescue platform.
- Direct passengers to points of safety.

Man Overboard

- Upon sighting a person overboard, throw a ring lifebuoy with lifeline into the water.
- Maneuver vessel
- Recover the person.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- Follow the procedures under “Medical emergency” as appropriate.

Emergency on Another Vessel

- Maintain contact with the disabled vessel through the VHF radio.
- Provide assistance as required.
- Contact shore resources, if appropriate, such as river police and towboat or barge companies.
- Maintain contact with other vessels in the area through VHF channels.

Medical Emergency

- Render first aid/CPR.
- Notify home base or designated ERT
- If required, seek medical-evacuation help over the VHF radio.
- Inform the local ambulance service.
- Inform vessel owners, agents, and other involved parties.

Exercising Contingency Plans: As contingency plans are developed they must be exercised and refined. Any organization that has developed a contingency plan is actually a part of several different response community levels starting with itself at the core.

Level 1 Exercises: At this level, focus on developing and practicing the vessel’s initial response capability such as alerting key personnel, starting emergency systems, securing non-essential machinery, starting evacuation procedures, controlling and directing passengers, and deploying on site personal protective and lifesaving equipment. Hold such exercises at least once a month.

Level 2 Exercises: This is where the concept of a response community exercise becomes operative. At this level, exercise with some or all of the external organizations listed in the plan. Focus on management exercises involving the organization’s response management team members. Table top exercises are appropriate. Although several organizations participate, the plan holder must design, control, exercise, and evaluate the plan. These exercises are more elaborate and require more planning. Hold these exercises at least once a year.

Level 3 Exercises: These represent a more advanced type of response community exercise. At this level, several contingency plan holders come together as equals to cooperatively plan and execute a marine incident response exercise. The objectives of this exercise are determined and agreed to collectively by the group instead of a single sponsoring organization.

❑ LIST OF CONTACTS AND REPORTING PROCEDURE

Contact List: Provide details of all parties that are to be advised in an emergency. Provide this information in the form of a contact list. Keep this information current at all times. When compiling such lists, remember that during a serious incident, vessel's personnel will be fully engaged in saving lives and taking steps to control and minimize the effects of the casualty. Do not hinder personnel by imposing onerous communications requirements.

Responsible Person: Clearly specify the person or persons responsible for informing personnel listed on the contact list. Coordinate the vessel's plan and the company's shoreside plan to ensure that all parties are advised and to avoid duplication of effort.

Reporting Procedure: Provide clear guidance to crew on the preferred means of communication (radio, telephone, fax, etc.) with the parties listed on the contact list. If the vessel visits many different ports on a regular basis, compile a contact list for each regularly visited port and their preferred means of communication. If the vessel visits a port for the first time or on an infrequent basis, provide guidance to the master to obtain details concerning local reporting procedures upon arriving in port.

❑ ANNEXES

Other shipboard plans or safety related information should be provided in the plan if they include relevant information to assist in an emergency. To keep the plan uncluttered and easily usable, it may be appropriate to provide other plans or information in an annex as a separate document which should be updated regularly.